

MINUTES
 REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE MEETING
 MUNCIE COMMON COUNCIL
 300 NORTH HIGH STREET
 MUNCIE, INDIANA 47305



JUNE 29, 2022

COMMITTEE MEETING: 5:30 P.M., 1st Floor City Hall Auditorium.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Ro Selvey.

| ROLL CALL: | PRESENT | ABSENT |
|---------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Chairman Brad Polk | X | |
| Members Aaron Clark | | X |
| Troy Ingram | X | |
| Jeff Robinson | X | |
| Jerry Dishman | X | |

DISCUSSION OF REDISTRICTING:

Councilman Polk, Chairman of the Redistricting Committee, begins by informing that the Council has not done this since, at least, he has been elected. It is supposed to be done once every 10 years and they obviously fell behind so he thinks it is very important to be as public as they can be. Therefore, they formed a Committee.

After Roll Call, Polk acknowledges the short Agenda. They are going to have a discussion of the redistricting and he thought they would start with (basically) the information he was able to find through the State of Indiana, the Indiana Election Division as well as House Bill 1285, which the State did make some changes to a couple years ago. The Common Council is made up of six (6) Districts and of those six there are 65,000 citizens of Muncie, according to the Census of 2020. An average of that would be 10,833 citizens per District. Polk refers to some documents he provided the Committee and as it can be seen, District #1 and District #6 are under that but all else are either at or above that. There isn't a whole lot that Polk thinks they can do. He does think there are some tweaks that they can (probably) make to bring District #1 up a little. He just wanted to go through the numbers. Also, according to the state of Indiana Election Division, there can be a 10% deviation from the largest to the smallest or a 10% deviation from the average. That is something they will need to look at and keep in mind as well when doing this redistricting. Precinct boundaries can not be crossed. No district can be split. For example, having half a Precinct in District #3 and the other half in District #2 is not allowable. The Districts should be compact and contiguous. Right now, they are all as compact as (he believes) they can get them but he knows some of the Census has changed. He explains Ball State really impacts several of the precincts. According to the Census, Precinct #27 has 6,235 and is mostly Ball State students that probably don't vote a lot, especially in the City elections. That area might have 100 out of the 6,200 people that vote. Polk informs it makes it tough but they have to follow the law and opens it up for anybody on the Committee if they have any questions or comments.

Councilman Robinson acknowledges that it looks like all the Districts remain pretty close. District #1 with 9,964 citizens is the smallest but District #6 has 10,072 citizens so there is not much of a difference there. He assumes they could decide to keep the Districts exactly the same if they wanted to.

Chairman Polk advises yes, they could do that if they wanted to. The Districts fit but he is not sure on the deviation and but they can figure it up as far as looking at the smallest and the largest and within the deviation of 10%. If it is not and is at (say) 8% and everybody is happy with that, they can go ahead and bring that to a vote. It could be as simple as that, yes.

Robinson questions if there has been thought of bringing in a third party to look at the Census and draw the Districts outside of the Democrat and Republican parties. Polk does not believe so, no. He recalls 10 years ago it being presented to them at a Regular City Council Meeting where they Introduced it then voted to Adopt the following month. There was that month in between to ask questions and such and he recalls having some questions of his own however, it was approved based on that. Polk thinks with a 5-person Committee as well as an open meeting (which they will get to next) for the audience to ask questions and state their comments or anything like that then those matters can be discussed as well. It may bring some things to light and adds they want to give the public an opportunity to express how they feel. This is not something being done behind closed doors and is all out in the open. Polk continues that is (kind of) why he thought they didn't really need a third party. There is our third party sitting right out there (and points out to the audience). He thinks the Committee will probably need more than one meeting to have the discussions before they make final recommendation because this is for the next 10 years. The next time this will be done is in 2032, long after Polk is done in public service and probably many other councilmembers are finished as well.

In looking at the largest and smallest Districts, there is 1,556 votes. That is roughly about 13%. They might need to tweak but he does not see a lot that they can do. Maybe move one out of each and move them around the pie chart (so to speak) so if you look at the map then it would create where it is not as much of a deviation towards getting under that 10%. Questions called on the map and numbers.

Polk did want to point out that there is no Precinct #5. There was on the old map in District #3. It was a tiny little section down on Purdue, Cowing and Cornbread that eventually was joined to become part of Precinct #14. Those numbers were added into #14 so are included there. Polk thinks that was the only one in the City that they actually had to deal with (recalling there being another one but it being outside the boundaries).

Councilman Ingram comments the biggest thing for him would be to remain up to state regulation and if they come up with any changes to then present those changes to the public and let them speak on those changes. He doesn't see any obvious changes that have to be made. Polk states that is one of the reasons he wanted to get this meeting in before their next meeting due to discussing what was talked about tonight during Committee Reports. The update he will be provided regarding the whole process beginning and can further provide the public an opportunity to show up and provide feedback. That is very important and the last thing they want to do is for it to be under the impression that they are just pushing it through. It has been too long and both parties have really done a poor job of publicizing what they are doing. That was one of the things that caused changes to the House Bill and also in sitting down with Brad King and the Election Committee. Polk asks if anyone else has anything, as for as the Committee and if not, he will open it up to the public if there are any questions, ideas or statements.

Polk adds he didn't think there would be too much discussion this evening because they are just getting started on it but they do have a deadline. It is December 31st so honestly their deadline is the December meeting. Polk would like to have this, ideally, Introduced in September and Adopted in October, at the latest. That way, there is a whole two months prior to the deadline and with the Finance meetings and budget season coming up, that tends to take up a bit of their time. He wants for them to (somewhat) have this out of the way or at least done in resolution or ordinance form and Introduced before the budget.

Robinson asks what Polk suggests is the best way for them to move forward. He asks if Polk would advise the Committee to take a look and make adjustments based on their own suggestions. Polk informs he would probably do that and recommends coming up with a mental idea, to ask themselves what can they move using the maps he provided and what can they do to get these Districts more even. It is known that there is never even going to be more than 10,833 apiece unless they change the precinct lines which they do not have that power to do.

Ingram says he is more concerned with following state statutes. Polk adds they want them to be compact and contiguous and get into that 10% or less deviation. That would be awesome. If they could hit all three and (obviously not cross Precinct boundaries) and hit eventually 4/4 targets then they have done their job. That is what they are shooting for.


Robinson questions if Polk is thinking August for the next Redistricting Meeting. Polk informs he was actually shooting for late July, aware they have the Regular Meeting on the 11th, plans for possibly a couple weeks after that. That gives, if needed, time to have another one in August. It would be possible if needed. Following that, the ordinance would need to be drafted by the Council Attorney. Attorney Gibson verifies the deadline again which Polk informs it is December 31st but without having a Special Meeting in December, the Regular December meeting would be the last time they can vote on it. Polk then verifies if Wednesdays work out for everybody as he was trying to find days and be conscious of everybody's time and schedules. They would be looking at July 27th for the next meeting which would give them two weeks from the Regular July Meeting. Polk advises he will get with the Council Secretary to make sure that the auditorium is available. Councilman Dishman confirms that date is not the week of the Delaware County Fair. Polk answers no, the fair is the week before. He also makes sure that the time of 5:30 PM sounds good to everyone, which there are no objections. Polk informs that works out for him because he can slide right down Hoyt and be here on time. Ingram informs it is easier for people to make the evening meetings as well. Polk agrees and mentions he is also checking about getting the next meeting livestreamed. They were unable to tonight but would like to for any future meetings.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION:


Polk, again, opens comments to the public. No public comments made.

ADJOURNMENT:


A motion was made by Robinson and seconded by Ingram to Adjourn. A vote by acclamation showed 4 yeas and 0 nays with 1 absent (Clark). MEETING ADJOURNED.



Jeff Robinson, President of the
Muncie Common Council

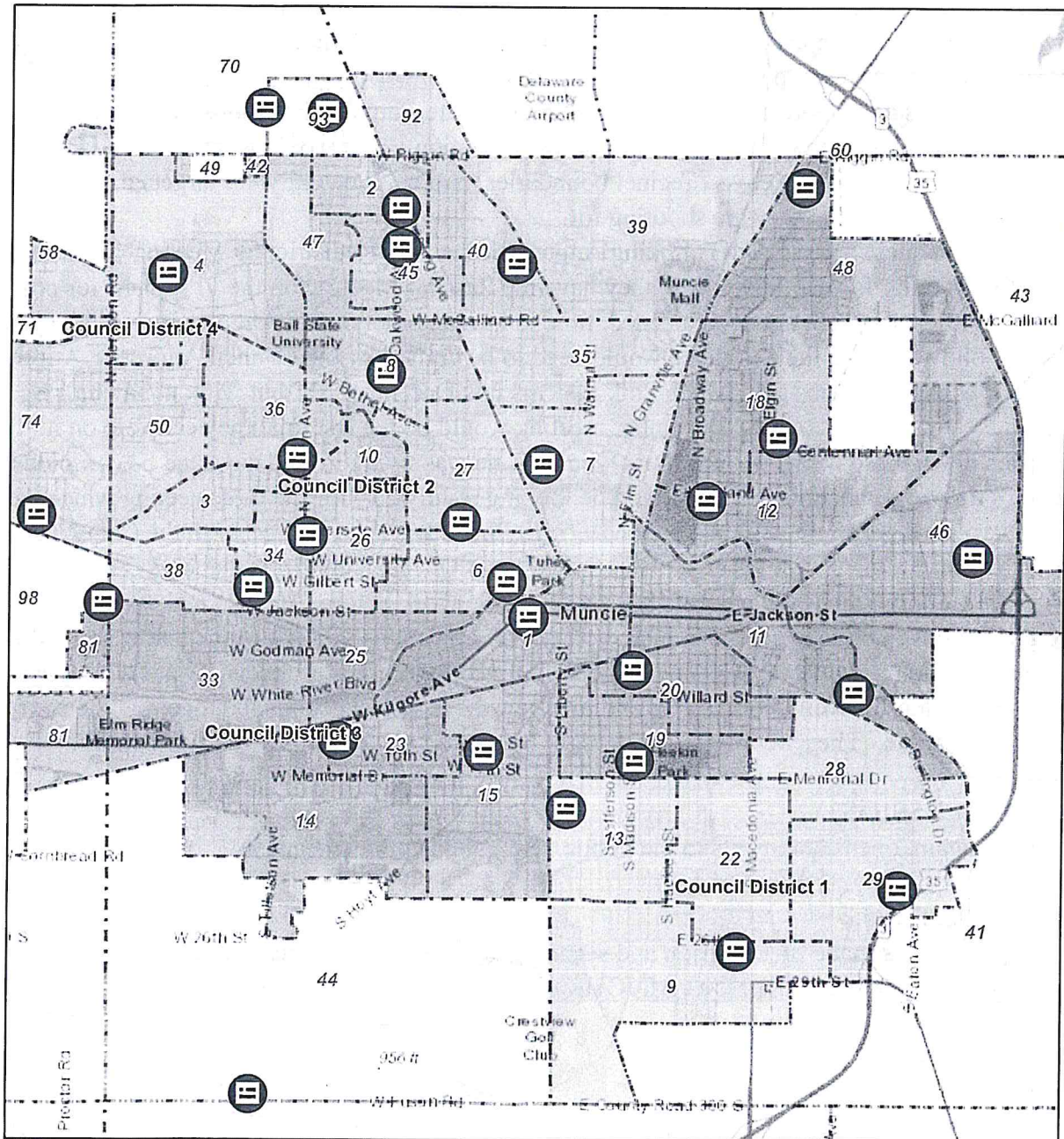


Belinda Munson, Muncie City Clerk
of the Muncie Common Council



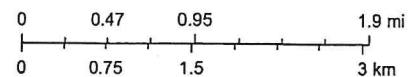
Brad Polk, Chairman of the Redistricting
Committee of the Muncie Common Council

Political Districts in Delaware County



June 15, 2022

1:72,224



Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community